

Utah WIC Policy and Procedures Manual

Section E: Food Instrument System

E. FOOD BENEFIT ISSUANCE SYSTEM

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E.1. Description of Computer Food instruments/cash-value vouchers

Policy

Description of Food Benefit Issuance

Procedure

- I. The Utah WIC Program utilizes computer generated food instruments/cash-value vouchers that are issued at the clinic site.
- II. Computer food instruments/cash-value vouchers printed by the clinic contain the individual WIC participant Family ID number, name of participant, clinic ID, First Day to Use, Last Day to Use, quantity, and food item description.

E.2. Food Voucher Stock Issued to the Clinic

Policy

Local Agency responsibilities regarding Voucher stock issued to the clinic.

Procedure

- I. The State Agency determines the amount of voucher stock each clinic needs to maintain an appropriate supply. Determination will be made when additional voucher stock will need to be sent to each clinic printing food instruments/cash-value vouchers. The clinic will need to inventory their voucher stock through the tracking numbers on the voucher and inform the State Agency when the State Agency will then send the necessary food voucher stock to the clinic. With each shipment of voucher stock, an Acknowledgment Form will be enclosed. This form serves as acceptance of receipt of the voucher stock and tracking numbers sent to that clinic.
- II. A Health Department staff or a clinic staff member, who does not issue WIC benefits, should examine the contents to make sure the tracking numbers correspond to those listed on the box and listed on the Acknowledgment Form. The individual signs the form if all the tracking numbers are present. The Acknowledgment Form is returned to the State Agency for audit purposes. If any of the voucher stock cannot be accounted for, the individual will document the tracking numbers or series of tracking numbers food instruments/cash-value vouchers missing on the Acknowledgment Form, and immediately contact the State WIC Office.
- III. Make sure that the individual who signs for the food vouchers is NOT the same person who issues WIC food benefits. If there is not a person available to sign

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for the vouchers who does not also issue food vouchers, then the signatures of two WIC staff acknowledging receipt is acceptable.

- IV. The maximum issuance of food benefits will be no more than a three-month supply of food instruments/cash-value vouchers at any one time to any participant, parent, or caretaker of an infant or child participant, or proxy.
- V. Education is required be provided to each applicant at the initial certification on how to use and redeem food instruments/cash-value vouchers.

E.3. Loading/Unloading Food Voucher Stock

Policy

Accountability for food instruments/cash-value vouchers being stored, loaded into the printers and unloaded from the printers at the clinic site

Procedure

- I. Each day prior to the issuance of food instruments/cash-value vouchers, the clinic needs to enter the sequence numbers of the food instrument/cash-value voucher stock that will be used for each printer. The first time the clinic enters the input screens, a message box will appear asking for the range of food instrument and cash-value voucher numbers that will be used. At the end of the day unload the printer and return the food vouchers back to the supervisor and/or the doubled locked secured area. When beginning the next day, the clinic needs to load the printer with the next food voucher sequence number that the clinic ended with the previous vouchering day. It is not recommended to begin a new printer sequence and produce a gap unless the clinic needs to open a new box.
- II. When loading food voucher stock for more than one printer, it is recommended but not required, that the local agency assign one box of food vouchers to each different printer. The staff member loading and unloading the food voucher stock is responsible to ensure the same box is assigned to the same printers the following WIC day.

E.4. Food Voucher Receipts (Tear-off Stubs- WICNU System)

- I. Food voucher receipts (tear-off stubs) are to be completed with black or blue ink as outlined below:

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- a. Since food voucher receipts provide a required audit trail for WIC Food instrument and cash-value voucher issuance and reconciliation, the clinic must ensure that all receipts are removed from the food instrument and cash-value voucher prior to issuance;
- b. All receipts MUST contain a signature, initials, or a “mark” of the WIC client on the first and last receipts of the family issuance or a VOID.
- c. All the receipts MUST be kept in numerical order (this is important if the clinic has to look up the status of the food instrument and cash-value voucher or if a re-sequence is needed);
- d. At the end of the day, all receipts can be combined from different printers. The combined receipts MUST be kept in numerical order for that day. The total food instrument and cash-value voucher receipts will be bound in numerical order and labeled with the name or number of the clinic and the date of issuance. Each day's receipts are stored in a dated box or envelope. The container will be labeled by federal fiscal year.

E.5. Food Benefit Issuance

Policy

Issuance of Utah WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the participant

Procedure

- I. Conflict of Interest and pre-printing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers
 - a. The State agency must ensure that no conflict of interest exists as defined by applicable State laws, regulations, and policies, between any local agency and any WIC participant, vendor or home food delivery contractor (under its jurisdiction). The WIC clinic will ensure that there is no conflict of interest that exists with any clinic employee issuing or receiving WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers, or within a local WIC clinic including a staff member being a proxy for a WIC participant.
 - i. A WIC clinic staff member cannot:
 - (a) Certify oneself; (7 CFR 246.4; (25)(i); or
 - (b) Certify relatives or close friends; (7 CFR 246.4 (25)(ii); or
 - (c) One employee determining eligibility for all certification criteria and issuing food instruments, cash-value vouchers or supplemental

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food for the same participant. (7 CFR 246.4, (25) (iii)) unless an exception is granted by the State Agency.

- (d) A WIC staff member cannot provide any part of WIC services to any member within the same economic unit (defined by Federal Regulations) as the employee or any relatives receiving food instruments/cash-value vouchers at that clinic.
- b. Clinics are not authorized to print food instruments/cash-value vouchers prior to the WIC participant arriving at the clinic unless the State Agency has granted an exception in writing. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers are printed and issued only when the WIC client is present in the clinic (except in the case of mailing). All Food instruments/cash-value vouchers not issued to the client at the time of pickup will be voided.
- c. To ensure the security of food instrument and cash-value voucher issuance, if the individual staff who has logged into the WICNU system decides to leave the work station, that individual should log off before leaving. Any individual who wishes to use that workstation will need to login. Multiple users cannot utilize the same log in. Each individual staff must log in with their own security information.

II. Computer food instrument and cash-value voucher issuance

- a. Program Regulations at 7 CFR 246.7(f) (2) (iv) allows the State Agency to provide prorated food benefits in the initial month of certification. For example, a participant who is certified on May 17 (1/3rd and 2/3rd at 10 and 20 days proration) will receive a 2/3rd month's (May 17-May 31) food instruments for the initial month of the certification period. The local agencies will issue appropriate pro-rated food benefits in the month of the initial certification. Cash-value vouchers cannot be prorated.
- b. All categories of participants are eligible to receive food benefits until the last day of the month during which the infant/child reaches a specific age. All participants are eligible for a full month's food benefits for their final month of eligibility.
- c. **(WICNU)** After printing and before issuing the food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the participant, the clinic **MUST** insure that the red and black numbers match. **DO NOT** issue food instruments/cash-value vouchers when the red/black numbers do not match. Contact the Help Desk if you need instructions on how to resolve a mis-numbering, as these should be corrected by the end of that business day.

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(VISION) The computer system food voucher stock will initially not have a printed check number. This will be printed on the instrument with the issuance so there will be no numbers to match.

- d. The clinic staff should ensure that the food instrument/cash-value voucher prescription is appropriate for the participant. If the food item(s), quantity, description, or MICR line is not accurate for issuance to the WIC participant, the clinic cannot not issue the food instrument/cash-value voucher and the clinic should immediately contact the State WIC office. The clinic staff is not permitted to cross-out, black-out, or otherwise alter any of the food item descriptions or quantity in any way. If the food prescription is correct, the **WICNU** system food instrument/cash-value voucher receipt(s) (stub) is torn off on the left hand side of the food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s);
- e. Ensure that the participant, parent, or caretaker of an infant or child participant, or proxy signs for receipt of food instruments/cash-value vouchers (**WICNU** system- signature on the check stub; **VISION** system- the clinic will capture an electronic signature). (**WICNU**) The WIC client must place their signature, initials, or "mark" (an "X" or "t" is not permitted) on the first and last food instrument/cash-value voucher receipts (stubs) of the series being issued in the presence of a clinic staff member. If the food instruments/cash-value vouchers are out of sequence, then each stub must be signed separately.
- f. (**WICNU**) The clinic will obtain original participant signatures. If a participant signature is missed, the clinic will write, "ISSUED" on the first and last food instrument/cash-value voucher of the series of issuance. This procedure is not an alternative nor in lieu of obtaining the original client's signature. This notation is ONLY used if the original signature was not obtained. After the receipt signatures are obtained, the entire family issuance should be folded and stapled together and placed on a spindle or holder.
- g. The primary endorser may designate a proxy to pick up food instruments/cash-value vouchers at the clinic and/or redeem food instruments/cash-value vouchers at the WIC vendor. Either the proxy can accompany the endorser to the clinic or the endorser may submit a note with the signature, initials, or mark of the endorser assigning the individual as a proxy. If a note is received from the endorser, the endorser's signature must match the one on the Rights and Responsibilities (or other signed documentation at the clinic). The **VISION** system will allow two endorsers.

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- h. In determining whether a particular participant or parent/ caretaker should be allowed to designate a proxy or proxies, the State agency must require the local agency or clinic to consider whether adequate measures can be implemented to provide nutrition education and health care referrals to that participant or, in the case of an infant or child participant, to the participant's parent or caretaker.
- i. The WIC client/proxy must be instructed that the time in which the food instruments/cash-value vouchers can be redeemed is between the "First Day to Use" and the "Last Day to Use." Most clients will be receiving three months of food instruments/cash-value vouchers, therefore, the clinic needs to reinforce the fact that food instruments/cash-value vouchers cannot be cashed prior to the "First Day to Use";
- j. The WIC client/proxy must be instructed that they will need to sign the WIC food instrument/cash-value voucher on the authorized signature line at the WIC vendor AFTER the cashier has placed the total amount of the food instrument/cash-value voucher in the "PAY EXACTLY" box. The authorized signature needs to stay within the signature box. Extra lines in the vendor stamp area or below in the MICR line area could cause redemption problems with the bank. The authorized signature on the food instrument/cash-value voucher MUST match the signature of the participant, client, or proxy on the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet. If the signatures do not match or if the signature does not appear on the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet, the food instrument/cash-value voucher should be rejected by the vendor. An original WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet must be used for the signature verification process. A photocopy or duplicate WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet cannot be used for the purposes of verifying signatures during a transaction.
- k. The clinic needs to verify that each WIC client/proxy has a signed Rights and Responsibilities statement (**WICNU** system- signature on the hard copy; **VISION**- the clinic will capture an electronic signature). The Rights and Responsibilities must be explained to the client/proxy and the signature witnessed by clinic personnel.
- l. The **WICNU** or the **VISION** system food instruments/cash-value vouchers should be placed in the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet according to the month of issuance. **WICNU** system Food instruments/cash-value vouchers to be cashed in the second month of issuance should be stapled together on the rear-off part of the instruments and placed in the voucher Packet as a safeguard against the participant cashing them early.

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VISION system food instruments/cash-value vouchers should NOT be stapled together as the actual food instruments cannot have a staple or staple hole that could affect bank processing.

- m. The clinic may issue one, two, or three months of food instruments/cash-value vouchers depending on the nutrition risk as determined by the clinic or State Agency Nutritionist.

III. Food instrument/cash-value voucher Issuance with Electrical or Computer Problems

- a. If the clinic computer(s) will not accept participant data or cannot print vouchers, the clinic should implement the following actions as needed:
 - i. If the computer equipment is operational, but there is no power, the clinic will follow the procedures for the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the participants who could not receive food instruments/cash-value vouchers during this period of power outage. The food instruments/cash-value vouchers for these participants should be produced as soon as possible and mailed to each participant. The clinic must obtain State Agency approval with any agency-wide mailing.
 - ii. If the computer equipment has failed in any way, the clinic must immediately notify the State WIC office so that replacement equipment can be issued to the clinic. The clinic will follow the procedures for the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the participants who could not receive food instruments/cash-value vouchers during this period of equipment failure. The food instruments/cash-value vouchers for these participants will be produced as soon as the replacement equipment is operational and mailed to each participant.

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E.6. Safeguarding Food Instruments Inventory

Policy

Security procedures regarding food voucher stock.

Procedures

- I. The safeguarding of unissued food vouchers at the local clinic is essential. Because of the potential loss of dollars with each sheet of food instrument/cash-value vouchers, it is important that effective security measures be observed. All WIC food vouchers must be secured under a double locking system. Each WICNU system food instrument, cash-value voucher, and food instrument/cash-value voucher receipt (stub- WICNU system) must be accounted for.
- II. These safeguarding standards must include maintenance of perpetual inventory records of food vouchers throughout the local agency's jurisdiction: 1) monthly physical inventory of food vouchers on hand throughout the local agency's jurisdiction; 2) reconciliation of perpetual and physical inventories of food instruments/cash-value vouchers; and 3) maintenance of all food instruments/cash-value vouchers under lock and key, except for supplies needed for immediate use.

For the **VISION** System, MICR printers, the drawer in the printer will have a lock to keep unused voucher stock.

- III. Within the clinic setting, the clinic supervisor needs to arrange for adequate security of the food instruments/cash-value vouchers being given to personnel at the beginning of each day, voucher stock that is loaded into the printer, and food instruments and/or cash-value vouchers being removed from the printer and stored for the next WIC day usage.
- IV. At all exchange of voucher stock between the locked area going to and from the printers, the supervisor must ensure that the voucher stock being issued to the clinic staff, the number of food of voucher stock printed, the number of voucher stock being returned at the end of day or the number of voucher stock being left in the printer, be accounted for.
- V. **STOLEN** food instruments/cash-value vouchers are those food instruments/cash-value vouchers that are missing, lost or stolen **PRIOR** to being printed for issuance. If food instruments/cash-value vouchers are **STOLEN** from the clinic, immediately contact the State Agency for further directions. If the clinic can determine the range of food instrument/cash-value voucher numbers **STOLEN**, report this to the State Agency when calling.

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- VI. Those clinics not on the CITRIX environment need to backup their clinic data on a nightly basis. The backup data CDs need to be stored in a secure place away from the clinic building (off site). It is advisable that the most current backup data CD be kept off site and in a totally separate building.

E.7. Transaction and Redemption

Policy

Utah WIC food instrument and cash-value voucher transaction and redemption procedures

Procedures

- I. Transaction and Redemption Procedures: After the issuance, the participant takes the food instrument/cash-value voucher to a Utah WIC authorized vendor, where the cashier:
 - a. Ensures the redemption date is within the FIRST DAY TO USE and the LAST DAY TO USE box.
 - b. Verifies the food items selected against the food issuance on the front of the food instrument/cash-value voucher
 - c. Requests to see the WIC I.D. Card/Voucher Packet
 - d. Writes in the actual total purchase price in the PAY EXACTLY box
 - e. Witnesses the client's or proxy's authorized signature on the front of the food instrument/cash-value voucher making sure the authorized signature matches one of the signatures on the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet. (The bank will not accept an "X" or "t" in lieu of a signature, initials, or specific mark)
 - f. Stamps the vendor number and date redeemed on the "PAY TO WIC VENDOR" and "DATE USED. The food instrument/cash-value voucher can now be deposited into the banking process.

E.8. Voiding A WIC Food Instrument or a Cash-Value Voucher

Policy

Appropriate methods to void different types of food instruments/cash-value vouchers

Procedures

- I. There are several types of problems for which a food instrument/cash-value voucher may need to be voided: torn or unusable voucher stock that has not been issued or printed; food vouchers that are rendered unusable because of printer problems; food vouchers that are torn incorrectly during removal from the printer; food vouchers with incorrect food packages; food instruments/cash-value vouchers that have been redeemed but the food item (usually infant formula) cannot be utilized by the WIC participant; and food vouchers that are reported by the participant. Alignment food instruments for **WICNU** are automatically voided.
 - a. **(WICNU)** If the food instrument/cash-value voucher becomes torn or otherwise unusable prior to printing (non-issuance), the clinic will void the food instrument/cash-value voucher by entering a "H" (in-hand) in the void reason column with an "N" in the reissue column. The printer sequence will have to be readjusted as the range of food instruments/cash-value vouchers have been designated during the printer setup sequence. Separate the receipt from the food instrument/cash-value voucher and mark VOID on the food instrument, cash-value voucher, and receipt. Place the voided receipt on the spindle where the printer is located, keeping the voided receipt in numerical sequence with any issued food instruments/cash-value vouchers. **(WICNU and VISION)** The voided food instrument/cash-value vouchers must be shredded at the clinic.
 - b. **(WICNU)** If a food instrument/cash-value voucher becomes unusable because of printing problems or is torn during removal from the printer, select the food instruments/cash-value vouchers to be voided, void the food instrument/cash-value voucher with an "H" in the void reason column and place a "Y" in the reissue column. The computer will automatically reissue and print the appropriate replacement food instrument/cash-value voucher based on the food package assigned. Place the voided receipt on the spindle where the printer is located, keeping the voided receipt in numerical sequence with any issued food instruments/cash-value vouchers. **(WICNU and VISION)** The voided food instrument/cash-value vouchers must be shredded at the clinic.

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- i. **(WICNU)** When a large number of food instruments/cash-value vouchers are unusable or need to be voided with an "H" (in-hand) void code, the clinic can only mass void one hundred (100) food instruments/cash-value vouchers or less without State agency authorization. If the clinic wishes to mass void greater than one hundred food instruments/cash-value vouchers, please contact the State WIC office.

- c. **(WICNU)** Incorrect food package or a change in the food package during an issuance period WITHOUT redemption of any the originally issued food instruments/cash-value vouchers:

If food instruments/cash-value vouchers are issued but NOT redeemed with an incorrect or change in a food package, the clinic will need to correct the food package number prior to a void and reissuance. After making the change, void the original food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) with an "H" in the void reason column and place a "Y" in the reissue column. The clinic can only use "H" (in-hand) when the clinic has the physical food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) or cash-value voucher(s). The computer will automatically reissue and print the appropriate replacement food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) based on the new food package assigned. Place the voided receipt(s) on a spindle (or bound) keeping the voided receipt(s) in numerical sequence with any issued or food instruments/cash-value vouchers. The voided food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) must be shredded at the clinic.

- d. **(WICNU)** Incorrect food package or a change in the food package during an issuance period with redemption of any of the originally issued food instruments/cash-value vouchers:

If the participant has redeemed all of the food instruments/cash-value vouchers and no formula purchased is returnable to the clinic (consumed or open cans), then a new food package or additional food benefits cannot be issued for that issuance period.

If the WIC participant has redeemed one or more food instruments/cash-value vouchers from the originally issued food package and other food benefits for that month have not been redeemed or are returnable, and the WIC participant needs to have a change made because of a medical provider prescription or nutrition- based decision during the current food issuance period, then the original food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) that have been redeemed will be voided with a "U" (USED) code.

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- i. 1] Reissuance within the first 10 days of the issuance period- no proration; or 2] issuance between 11-31 days- with a 20 or 10-day proration. All changes need to be documented in the comment section.

- 1. Reissuance within the first 10 days of the issuance period:

Determine the number of cans of formula (or quantity of other food items) that the WIC participant has already purchased and consumed or cannot be returned (*the clinic is not allowed to accept any partially consumed product or credit the participant for any partially consumed product, or credit the participant for product that is not returned at the time of re-issuance*); and

Determine the number of unused or unredeemed cans of formula (or quantity of other food items) the WIC client is returning. The clinic selects a new food package based on the maximum cans of formula (or food items) that can be issued for that month, (*the number of cans or food items from a full food package minus the cans or food items already purchased and consumed*). Credit for re-issuance is allowed for any cans of formula (or other foods) not redeemed and/or returned to the WIC office not opened or not consumed. The clinic will select a food package that will total the maximum allowed issuance minus any formula redeemed and non-returnable. (*For example: The original full food package was for nine (9) cans of formula. Two (2) cans of formula were purchased with one food instrument and were opened and consumed by the infant. If the maximum food package allowed nine (9) cans of formula, then the clinic would select a new package with seven (7) cans of formula*). If there is no food package that will fit the adjusted amount, select a food package that is the closest to the needed amount but does not over-issue the maximum quantity per month for that food item.

- 2. Reissuance between 11-31 days of the issuance period

Determine the number of cans of formula (or quantity of other food items) that the WIC participant has already purchased and consumed or cannot be returned (*the clinic is not allowed to accept any partially consumed product or credit the participant for any partially consumed product, or credit the participant for product that is not returned at the time of re-issuance*); and

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Determine the number of unused or unredeemed cans of formula (or quantity of other food items) the WIC client is returning. The clinic selects a new food package based on the maximum cans of formula (or food items) that can be issued for that month, (*the number of cans or food items from a full food package minus the cans or food items already purchased and consumed*). Credit for re-issuance is allowed for any cans of formula (or other foods) not redeemed and/or returned to the WIC office not opened or not consumed. The clinic will select a food package that will total the maximum allowed issuance minus any formula redeemed and non-returnable. (*For example: The original full food package was for nine (9) cans of formula. Two (2) cans of formula were purchased with one food instrument and were opened and consumed by the infant. If the maximum food package allowed nine (9) cans of formula, then the clinic would select a new package with seven (7) cans of formula*). If there is no food package that will fit the adjusted amount, select a food package that is the closest to the needed amount but does not over-issue the maximum quantity per month for that food item.

(WICNU) Allow the system to normally prorate the selected package as appropriate for the 20 or 10-day issuance period.

3. Change the food package number to the new issuance. Inquire on the food instruments/cash-value vouchers issued and void the food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) that were redeemed with a "U" (USED) in the reason column. Place a "Y" in the reissue column and the new food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) with the corrected food package will be printed.

(WICNU & VISION) The clinic must document in the Comment Screen the number of food items consumed by the WIC client with the "USED" voucher(s), what amount of product was returned, and what new food package was selected or list the quantity of formula or food items issued.

- e. If a food instrument/cash-value voucher is reported LOST by the WIC client, inquire on the food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) before the clinic reissues the actual food instrument(s) cash-value voucher(s) in order to verify they have not been redeemed (unless the waiting period has been waived).

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- i. The inquiry is for two purposes: 1) to determine which food instruments/cash-value vouchers have been redeemed and 2) to attempt to identify exactly which food instruments/cash-value vouchers have been lost. This is necessary to determine which food instrument(s) and how many food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) to replace and then to identify these lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers as potential Program violations if they are redeemed along with the replacement food instruments/cash-value vouchers. The inquiry is not always the absolute indicator of which food instruments/cash-value vouchers may have been redeemed. If the WIC client states they redeemed some of the food instruments/cash-value vouchers, but the inquiry has no food instruments/cash-value vouchers redeemed, base the reissuance on what the WIC client is saying in conjunction with the inquiry because the food instrument/cash-value voucher in question may have been delayed in the banking system or rejected because of a vendor error.
- ii. The clinic must document in Comment Section whether the lost food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) in question could be specifically identified as lost (able to identify) or could not be specifically identified as the lost food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) (unable to identify). In the case where they client states they lost all their food instruments/cash-value vouchers, then all the food instruments/cash-value vouchers that have not been redeemed can be identified as lost (able to identify).
- iii. The WIC client must be counseled regarding the redemption of the reported lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers and the replacement food instruments/cash-value vouchers. The clinic needs to stress that redemption of the identified lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers and the replacement food instruments/cash-value vouchers will result in suspension and repayment of benefits. Document the counseling in the Comment Section of the computer system.
- iv. **(WICNU)** Void the food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) with an "L" (LOST) in the reason column. Place a "Y" in the reissue column and the replacement food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) will be printed. If the lost food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) are redeemed and the specific lost food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) were identified in the Comments section (able to identify), and the proxy signature (if applicable) is authorized, then participant violation procedures need to be implemented. If the clinic cannot specifically identify the lost food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s)

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(unable to identify), then no alleged participant violation can be issued and a form should not be completed.

- II. The clinic needs to ensure that the food instrument/cash-value voucher is being voided for the correct reason. Only use the "H" code if the clinic actually has the food instrument/cash-value voucher "in-hand." Use the "U" code only when reissuing food instruments/cash-value vouchers that have been redeemed from the originally issued food package and the WIC participant needs to be issued a new food package. Use the "L" code only when reporting a lost food instrument/cash-value voucher. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers redeemed early cannot be voided and re-issued.
 - a. The local WIC agency will research "H" (in-hand) void food instruments/cash-value vouchers that have been redeemed and determine if these voided food instruments/cash-value vouchers indicate that the WIC participant was allowed to receive more food benefits than the maximum issuance for this client. If additional benefits were given, the clinic will document how much additional food was issued in the comment screen. Allowing the issuance and redemption of additional foods to the participant due to clinic error because of "H" (in-hand) voided food instruments/cash-value vouchers will be considered a finding during a Management Evaluation visit.
- III. When reissuing food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) that were lost, the clinic will need to determine through whatever investigative measures are necessary to identify the specific food instruments/cash-value vouchers that were lost. Replace on a one for one basis only. Issue one food instrument/cash-value voucher for one food instrument/cash-value voucher voided. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers must be voided before reissuance.
- IV. When voiding food instruments/cash-value vouchers, the clinic needs to be aware that if an "N" is placed in the reissuance column, the clinic cannot at a later date go back and change that column designation or reissue that food instrument/cash-value voucher.
- V. The clinic needs to ensure that all unusable food instrument/cash-value voucher stock is voided appropriately.
- VI. All food instruments/cash-value vouchers must be voided by the Last Day to Use. The local clinic must shred all expired checks.
- VII. The clinic cannot void and reissue food instruments/cash-value vouchers that were not redeemed within the valid issuance dates.

E.9. Un-reconciled Food instruments/Cash-value Vouchers and Gaps in Food Instrument Numbers (WICNU System)

Policy

Procedures in dealing with un-reconciled food instruments/cash-value vouchers and gaps in food instrument and cash-value voucher numbers with the daily reports

Procedures

- I. The clinic needs to ensure that all food instruments/cash-value vouchers assigned to the clinic are reconciled. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers **MUST** have one of these designations:
 - a. Assigned to the clinic, not issued
 - b. Voided "H" (in-hand), not issued or issued, not redeemed
 - c. Voided "H" (in hand), redeemed
 - d. Voided as "U" (used), issued and redeemed
 - d. Voided as "L" (lost), issued
 - e. Voided as "S" (stolen), not issued
 - f. Issued, not redeemed
 - g. Issued, stale dated and therefore voided
 - h. Issued and redeemed
- II. If the clinic has a gap in the food instrument/cash-value voucher number sequence that is not a result of changing food instrument stock in the printers or a void code, the clinic must investigate the reason why the gap occurred in order to reconcile the food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) involved. All food instrument/cash-value voucher numbers in gap sequence will need to be voided or otherwise reconciled with the Help Desk.
- III. Any food instruments/cash-value vouchers between the First Day to Use (FDTU) and sixty (60) days from the First Day to Use that are returned to the clinic must be voided on the system. After voiding on the system, the food instrument/cash-value voucher must be shredded by the clinic.

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- IV. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers greater than sixty (60) days from the first day to use need not be voided on the system, but still must be returned to the State Agency.

E.10. Infant Formula Returned to the Local Clinics.

Policy

Procedure for infant formula returned to the local clinic.

Procedures

- I. Infant formula purchased by WIC participants with federal food dollars that cannot be utilized by the participant for any reason must be returned to the local clinic of issuance. Local agency clinics are required to accept any formula in order to determine what amount of product can be reissued and deter the participant from selling/giving away the formula purchased with federal funds.
 - a. The clinic receiving the infant formula purchased with federal funds will use the **RETURNED INFANT FORMULA LOG** to document the Date Received, Participant Name, Participant number, number of cans returned, type of infant formula, and the clinic staff signature receiving the formula.
 - b. Infant formula returned to the local WIC clinic purchased by the WIC client using WIC food instruments CANNOT BE REISSUED. All returned infant formula should be destroyed in accordance to local county or local health department policy and documented on the **RETURNED INFANT FORMULA LOG** as "DESTROYED" with the date and a clinic staff signature. All documentation associated with the destruction should be attached to the **RETURNED INFANT FORMULA LOG**.

E.11. Special Situations and Instructions

- I. Participants, parents, and caretakers of infant and child participants, and proxies are required to pick up food instruments/cash-value vouchers in person when scheduled for nutrition education or for an appointment to determine whether participants are eligible for a subsequent certification period. However, the State agency may provide for issuance through an alternative means such as EBT or mailing, unless FNS determines that such actions would jeopardize the integrity of program services or program accountability. (7 CFR 246.12, (r), (4))

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- II. Food instruments and Cash-value vouchers will not be mailed to participants if the participant is scheduled for nutrition education or breastfeeding counseling or recertification.
- III. Mailing of Food instruments/cash-value vouchers on an Agency Wide Basis
 - a. Federal Regulations allow for the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers to participants on an individual basis for approved reasons.
 - b. Federal Regulations allow for the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers to participants on a local agency-wide basis if approved by the State agency.
 - c. Local agencies should utilize the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers on an agency wide and/or individual basis only when circumstances would otherwise prohibit participants from picking up their food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
 - d. **THE STATE WIC OFFICE MUST BE CONTACTED FOR PRIOR APPROVAL TO THE MAILING OF FOOD INSTRUMENTS/CASH-VALUE VOUCHERS ON AN AGENCY-WIDE BASIS.**
- IV. Procedures for mailing food instruments/cash-value vouchers on an agency wide basis are as follows:
 - a. Written approval from the Utah State WIC Office must be received before a local agency implements the mailing of WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers on an agency wide basis.
 - b. When mailing on an agency-wide basis, not more than three month's worth of food instruments/cash-value vouchers may be mailed to each participant during a six-month certification period. The local agency should inform the State office concerning which months during the certification period that food instruments/cash-value vouchers will be mailed.
 - c. Agency-wide mailings can be done for only one month at a time. Schedule the participants for a nutrition education class/food instrument/cash-value voucher pickup for the following month.
 - d. If a local agency chooses to mail food instruments/cash-value vouchers during the 6th month of the certification period, participants must be informed in writing with the mailing prior to the next appointment of the following information:
 - i. The date their certification period expires;

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- ii. That unless they are recertified, they will not receive more food instruments/cash-value vouchers;
- iii. The date and time of their certification appointment(s) for the following month, including which family members must be brought into the clinic;
- iv. Any participant who is categorical ineligible must be notified of the date of their ineligibility.
- v. Documentation must be made in each individual WIC file or comment section to indicate the date and reason that food instruments/cash-value vouchers are mailed.
- vi. Participants or parent/guardians should address their own envelopes during the previous month's visit. These pre-addressed envelopes should be maintained in the participants file until the "mailing month." The envelopes cannot contain a return address with "WIC" printed on them, but may contain a Health Dept. name. Participants should also be informed of their responsibility to notify the clinic if the mailed food instruments/cash-value vouchers are lost/stolen or if they change addresses.
- vii. The "FIRST DAY TO USE" recorded on the mailed food instruments/cash-value vouchers should be recorded as the date the food instruments/cash-value vouchers are mailed. These food instruments/cash-value vouchers are then valid until the "LAST DAY TO USE" printed on the front.
- viii. The food instrument/cash-value voucher receipt is removed from each food instrument/cash-value voucher and documented with the designation "MAILED" with the date mailed and the signature of the clinic personnel mailing the food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
- ix. Clinics should indicate "DO NOT FORWARD" on the envelopes containing WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
- x. All WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers must be mailed by Certified Mail. The clinic will receive a **RETURN RECEIPT** as acknowledgment that the food instruments/cash-value vouchers were received. The **RETURN RECEIPT** should be kept in the participant's chart for documentation.
- xi. If the food instruments/cash-value vouchers are not deliverable as addressed, they should be returned to the appropriate clinic. The clinic

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should then file these returns in alphabetical order and VOID them if not picked up by the end of the month.

- e. Participants who do not receive their food instruments/cash-value vouchers at the expected time of the month should call the WIC clinic to make arrangements to pick up the returned food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
 - f. The local agency may elect not to mail food instruments/cash-value vouchers to those participants defined by the agency as, "High Risk." The State WIC Office should be advised of this local agency decision.
 - f. The local agency must assure the State WIC Office that nutrition education and appropriate health services are provided to participants during the months that food instruments/cash-value vouchers are mailed.
- V. Mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers shall be permitted on an individual basis for the following conditions:
- a. Illness (temporary: otherwise, a proxy should be designated)
 - b. Imminent childbirth: if the current month coincides with the woman's EDC
 - c. Inclement weather conditions (as determined by the competent professional authority or nutritionist). Distance to travel: this applies to rural areas where persons in need would be otherwise unable to regularly participate in the Program due to distance, unimproved roads, or seasonal inclement weather conditions
 - d. High cost of travel: if the distance from the participant's residence to the WIC clinic is more than 25 miles away, one-way
 - e. Inability to get to the WIC clinic during business hours. Participants should be highly encouraged to make every effort to obtain their food instruments/cash-value vouchers in person from the clinic during normal business or extend hours. Appointments are made in advance; therefore, clients or their proxies have time to arrange for a mutually agreeable time to pick up the food instruments/cash-value vouchers in person. The competent professional authority or nutritionist will be responsible for the decision regarding this circumstance
 - g. Clinic Equipment Failure: (Computer/printer/electrical malfunction that interferes with the normal production or issuance of food instruments/cash-value vouchers at the clinic site)

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- b. When a participant requests that food instruments/cash-value vouchers be mailed due to an emergency described above, issue only that month's food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
- VI. **No more than three month's worth of food instruments/cash-value vouchers will be mailed to any participant during a certification period.** When a participant requests that food instruments/cash-value vouchers be mailed due to an emergency, issue only that month's food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
- VII. Whenever food instruments/cash-value vouchers are mailed on an individual basis the following points should be taken into consideration:
- a. Whenever possible, proxy signatures should be obtained by those participants who anticipate difficulty in personally obtaining food instruments/cash-value vouchers during a certification period.
 - b. The reason for mailing WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers must be documented by the local agency in the participant's file or comment section.
 - c. The mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers to participants will be discontinued if the participant's initial hardship is resolved.
 - d. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture recommends that, wherever feasible, participants personally obtain their food instruments/cash-value vouchers from the WIC clinic to ensure that nutrition education and health services are integrated and are frequently available to participants.
 - e. A system must be established by each local agency to help ensure that potential abuse is avoided concerning the mailing of food instruments/cash-value vouchers (for example, what will be done to ensure that authorized persons are signing WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers).

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E.12. WIC Voucher Packet/Identification (I.D.) Card

Policy

Procedures and utilization of the Utah WIC Voucher Packet/Identification card

Procedures

- I. Description: The WIC Voucher Packet/Identification card is an integral part of the food delivery system. The Voucher Packet/I.D. card **MUST** be presented by the participant:
 - a. At each appointment to receive food instruments/cash-value vouchers, and
 - b. At the time of redemption to validate the food instrument/cash-value voucher transaction.
- II. Completing the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet
 - a. Issue one Voucher Packet/I.D. card per family.
 - b. The clinic stamp must be placed on the Voucher Packet/I.D. card.
 - c. The front of the Voucher Packet/I.D. card should be completed in the following manner:
 - i. Print the first and last name of the endorser on the appropriate line.
 - ii. Print the first name of the participant(s).
 - iii. Have the endorser sign the signature line (an "X" or "t" is not permitted as a signature, mark, or initials). A proxy may also sign the card, allowing a different person to pickup and/or redeem the WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers. However, if no proxy is designated by the endorser, then the clinic will stamp in ink on the proxy signature line, "NONE AUTHORIZED." **Do not alter, stamp over, or white-out any aspect of the signature lines, the vendor will not accept an altered signature line.**
 - iv. In order for both an endorser and a proxy signature to appear on the Voucher Packet/I.D. Card, the endorser and the proxy must be present, complete the Proxy Release form, and be issued a new WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet with both signatures.

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- v. If the proxy brings in an endorser note with a verifiable endorser signature, a new WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet is issued with only the proxy's signature on the card and 'NONE AUTHORIZED' on the endorser signature line.
- vi. No manually written or strikeout lines should be used, only stamps, so that the vendors do not accept hand-written manual changes.
- d. The back of the Voucher Packet/I.D. Card should be completed using the State Agency authorized clinic stamp in the following manner:
 - i. Stamp the name of the clinic, address, and phone number in the appropriate space,
- e. The appointment entry of the Voucher Packet/I.D. card should be completed in the following manner:
 - i. Print the date and time of the client's next scheduled appointment in the appropriate space.

III. Card Supply

- v. Upon request, the State will distribute Voucher Packet/I.D. cards, to each clinic site. Card requests should be on the Clinic Supplies Order Form and addressed to the State WIC Clerk.

IV. Safeguarding WIC Packet ID/Cards

- a. It is important to carefully store and safeguard the unissued Voucher Packet/I.D. cards. Because the I.D. card validates the retailer's WIC transaction, the Voucher Packet/I.D. cards have potential value. Make sure that the WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packets are locked in a secure storage facility.

V. Food instrument/cash-value voucher Issuance to High Risk Participants

- a. WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers may be issued on a monthly, bi-monthly, or tri-monthly basis for WIC clients that are determined to be at High Risk by the CPA/Nutritionist. It is also advisable to issue WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers monthly for other clients that are scheduled for monthly or bi-monthly follow up care.
- b. The CPA must document in the participant's file that the client is receiving food instruments/cash-value vouchers for one month or two months due to the participant's need for follow up care (as opposed to tri-monthly).

E.13. Lost and Misplaced WIC Food instrument(s)/Cash-value Vouchers/Voucher Packet/I.D. Card(s)

Policy

Procedures for lost or misplaced WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers or WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packets

Procedure

- I. When a participant notifies the WIC clinic that their WIC have been truly lost or stolen (not forgotten or misplaced in a known location by the client), take the following steps:
 - a. The WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet can be replaced at any time without a waiting period. The clinic must witness the signature(s) on the front of the Voucher/I.D. packet. The WIC participant or the endorser must provide proof of identity when requesting a replacement WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet during a certification period. The Voucher Packet I.D. Card must be presented when replacing food instruments/cash-value vouchers.
 - b. If this is the FIRST incident of lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers during a CERTIFICATION period, the clinic will inform the participant that there will be a waiting period of seven (7) calendar days before replacement food instrument(s) or cash-value voucher(s) will be issued with the exception of personal misfortune as defined in 1. h. and E14. The clinic will make a Priority I documentation in the Comment Screen (**WICNU**) or use the Family Screen; FB Issuance – number of months dropdown menu, select “No food benefits” (**VISION**) regarding the date the participant reported the loss and requested replacement and that the participant, guardian, or proxy was counseled that redeeming the reported lost food instruments and the replacement food instruments will result in repayment of benefits or a period of disqualification.
 - c. The participant/guardian should be instructed to search for the lost item(s) during the waiting period.
 - d. If the clinic is not open during the time the seven (7) calendar day waiting period is completed, the clinic may mail the food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the participant by certified mail.
 - e. If the participant reports a second incident of lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers during the same CERTIFICATION period, the clinic will NOT replace any of these food instruments/cash-value vouchers with the

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exception that in the case of a participant who is an infant, child, or under age 18, the local agency may approve the designation of a proxy and replace the food instruments/cash-value vouchers after the initial seven (7) day waiting period.

- f. **(WICNU)** If the system prorates the food instruments because of the waiting period, an override is not authorized solely based on the lost food instrument waiting period.
 - g. Discuss with the participant/guardian/proxy the necessity of safeguarding the food instruments/cash-value vouchers. **They should treat their WIC vouchers as cash.**
 - h. Exceptions to the waiting period include isolated personal misfortune incidents. (E.14.)
- II. When a participant notifies the WIC clinic that their WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers and/or Voucher Packet/I.D. Card has been forgotten and left in a known location by the client, take the following steps
- a. The WIC client or proxy may produce photo identification with an authorized signature. If the signature on the photo ID matches the WIC client or the proxy's signature on a current Rights & Responsibilities, then food instruments/cash-value vouchers may be issued. *Do not issue a new WIC Voucher/Identification Card Packet.*
- III. When the local WIC agency is aware that a lost or stolen food instrument/cash-value voucher is being held by an known individual (not covered under Personal Misfortune) for which the food instruments/cash-value vouchers were not issued (except for law enforcement, chain of evidence, or court proceedings), the local agency will send a certified letter to the unauthorized individual involved requesting that the food instruments/cash-value vouchers be returned to the clinic. The local agency may then void the food instruments/cash-value vouchers as lost and reissue the food instruments/cash-value vouchers to the authorized participant.

E.14. Replacing WIC Food Benefits that are Lost in Personal Misfortune

Policy

Replacement of WIC food benefits that is lost due to personal misfortune.

Procedure

- I. In isolated personal misfortune incidents where one or a few households might be affected by some destructive incident such as domestic violence, theft, gas line explosion, water main break, house fire, including power outages with loss of WIC perishable food items, the clinic may reissue WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers to cover the food items lost in these circumstances.
 - a. In the case of domestic violence, documentation must be provided in the form of a police report or a related third party official report. The WIC participant may also self-declare their incidence of domestic violence and provide a written statement or affidavit documenting the incident.
 - b. In the case of any other personal misfortune, documentation must be provided in the form of a police, fire, insurance or other related third party official report with the exception of domestic violence.
- II. The clinic must inquire regarding the status of the food instruments/cash-value vouchers prior to re-issuance. If the food instruments/cash-value vouchers are redeemed, they cannot be re-issued without verification of signatures. If the food instruments/cash-value vouchers are not redeemed, then they are to be voided as LOST and a comment documented regarding the amount and type of WIC food items that were lost due to personal misfortune.
 - a. The clinic may then issue new food instruments up to the amount of the loss without the required waiting period. Replacement food instruments/cash-value vouchers can only be reissued within the time frame of the issuance dates.
 - b. This policy does not apply to mass disasters where emergency feeding services are typically available.
 - c. If the report of personal misfortune, documentation, or replacement food issuance is not covered in this policy and procedure, the clinic is directed to contact the State Agency for clarification.

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E.15. State Agency Reconciliation of Food instruments/cash-value vouchers

Policy

Procedures for reconciliation and payment of Utah WIC food instruments/cash-value vouchers by the State Agency

Procedure

- I. The Utah WIC Program currently utilizes a State maintained computer system consisting of clinic-based issuance of food instruments/cash-value vouchers by PCs with modem or internet capabilities to the state mainframe. Reconciliation is accomplished through daily upload/download of participant and food instrument/cash-value voucher issuance information that is forwarded to the bank. The bank screens the food instrument/cash-value voucher for the required redemption criteria and verifies that the food instrument/cash-value voucher issuance record is present.
- II. The State agency must account for the disposition of all food instruments/cash-value vouchers as either issued or voided, and as either redeemed or unredeemed. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers must be identified as validly issued, lost, stolen, expired, duplicate, or not matching valid enrollment and issuance records. This process must be performed within 120 days of the first valid date for participant use of the food instruments/cash-value vouchers and must be conducted in accordance with Food and Nutrition Service, USDA § 246.12 the financial management requirements of § 246.13. The local agency must account for all food instruments/cash-value vouchers identified through End of Day and Unused Check Stock reports within 90 days of the first valid date of use (First Day to Use) or when identified on the reports.
- III. FNS will establish a claim against any State agency that has not accounted for the disposition of all redeemed food instruments/cash-value vouchers and taken appropriate follow-up action on all redeemed food instruments/cash-value vouchers that cannot be matched against valid enrollment and issuance records, including cases that may involve fraud, unless the State agency has demonstrated to the satisfaction of FNS that it has:
 - a. Made every reasonable effort to comply with this requirement;
 - b. Identified the reasons for its inability to account for the disposition of each redeemed food instrument/cash-value voucher; and
 - c. Provided assurances that, to the extent considered necessary by FNS, it will take appropriate actions to improve its procedures.

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- IV. Program funds may not be used to pay for retroactive benefits § 246.14 (a) (2).
- V. Redemptions
 - a. An issuance record from each clinic is uploaded to the mainframe each night. The issuance record is forwarded to the bank who will match each food instrument/cash-value voucher against the clinic issuance record when the food instrument/cash-value voucher is presented for payment.
 - b. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers forwarded by retailers are drawn against the WIC account, and information containing redemption transactions are produced and forwarded to the State Agency mainframe. This information is posted as redeemed food instrument/cash-value voucher transactions.
 - c. In the event that the issuance record does not match the redemption record, the State Agency will be contacted regarding resolution of appropriate issuance records.
- VI. Monitoring Redeemed Food instruments/cash-value vouchers
 - a. Three hundred redeemed food instruments/cash-value vouchers will be reviewed once a month for all required parameters. Errors that are identified will be individually investigated and appropriate follow-up action will be taken with the vendor or bank as appropriate. Food instruments/cash-value vouchers will be reviewed by the State Agency for the following:
 - i. Purchase price missing
 - ii. The authorized signature is missing/does not match
 - iii. Vendor ID stamp imprint missing or unreadable
 - iv. Redemption outside valid date
 - v. Altered price
 - vi. Altered food items or quantities
 - vi. Altered or missing issue dates
 - viii. Missing or illegible redemption date stamp

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- b. The State Agency ensures that the bank will screen each food instrument/cash-value voucher and reject it for the following reasons:
 - i. Missing, illegible, invalid, or unauthorized vendor stamp
 - ii. Authorized signature missing
 - iii. Prior to the First Day to Use or greater than sixty (60) days from the Last Day to Use
 - iv. Two standard deviations above the average estimated cost in accordance with the vendor peer group or exceeds the maximum account limit of \$120.00 for food instruments or the total fixed amount as designated for cash-value vouchers.
 - v. Altered First Day to Use, Last Day to Use, or dollar amount
 - vi. Missing or illegible redemption date stamp

VII. Food instrument and cash-value voucher Reconciliation

- a. Information containing assignment, issuance, and void transactions are forwarded along with the redeemed food instruments/cash-value vouchers from the bank for entry into the mainframe. In this manner, one-to-one reconciliation is accomplished for every food instrument/cash-value voucher.
- b. In the event a food instrument/cash-value voucher has been issued but not redeemed by the vendor within sixty (60) days from the Issue Date, the food instrument/cash-value voucher is designated by the system as expired and rejected by the bank if redemption is attempted. Any reconciliation may be verified through the system regarding the expired status.
- c. Lost food instruments/cash-value vouchers that have been redeemed, will be sent to the clinic in order to determine if a participant violation has occurred. These food instrument/cash-value voucher discrepancies will be monitored at the clinic's management evaluation visit.

VIII. Issued and Redeemed Check Exception Report (WICNU System)

- a. This State Agency report identifies food instruments/cash-value vouchers that are voided with an "L" or "U" code and have been redeemed.

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- b. A photocopy of the redeemed voucher or a payment screen printout with a cover letter will be sent to the clinic asking for investigation.
- c. If the food instrument/cash-value voucher was voided as a “U” and redeemed, the clinic will examine the original documentation to ensure the additional issuance is appropriate. If no documentation exists, the clinic must document in the Comment Section why the food instrument/cash-value voucher was voided with a “U” code and justify why a different food package was issued.
- d. If the food instrument/cash-value voucher was voided with an “L” code, the clinic will initiate participant violation procedures in accordance with Section G, WIC PARTICIPANT VIOLATIONS. The participant has redeemed a food instrument/cash-value voucher that has been reported as lost but has been redeemed. The explanation of the redemption must also be documented in the Comment Section.